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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 OMB-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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STR-01 /084 W
---------- 111893
R 010956Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7698
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY ROME
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2775

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GE, GW, UR
SUBJECT: PRAVDA ON SOVIET-FRG RELATIONS

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

REF: BONN 00983

1. SUMMARY. PRAVDA ON FEBRUARY 28 PUBLISHED A SIGNED COMMENTARY PORTRAYING FRG FOREIGN POLICY ACTION VIS-A-VIS THE "SOCIALIST STATES" IN AN UNUSUALLY FAVORABLE LIGHT. THE TONE OF THE ARTICLE CONTRASTS RATHER SHARPLY WITH THE DRUBBING THE FRG HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO OF LATE IN THE SOVIET PRESS. WE READ IT TO BE AN INDICATON (AND POSSIBLY
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A SIGNAL TO BONN) OF CONTINUING SOVIET INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS

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WITH THE FRG EVEN DURING THIS YEAR OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY.

2. THE FRG EMBASSY HERE CONTINUES TO FEEL CONSIDERABLE UNEASE ABOUT THE RAMIFICATIONS FOR SOVIET-FRG RELATIONS OF THE MASSIVE SOVIET CELEBRATION OF THIS ANNIVERSARY. ND SUMMARY

3. THE PRAVDA ARTICLE IS SIGNED "V. YEZHOV, PROFESSOR." WE ASSUME THAT THIS IS V. D. YEZHOV, AN OFFICIAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. YEZHOV HAS ATTENDED FRG COMMUNIST PARTY CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS IN THE PAST AS A CC REPRESENTATIVE AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AUTHORITATIVE ON SOVIET-FRG RELATIONS.

4. THE ARTICLE, WHICH IS CENTERED ON A DISCUSSION OF THE SPD PARTY CONFERENCE ON FOREIGN POLICY IN JANUARY (REFTEL), PORTRAYS FRG FOREIGN POLICY ACTIONS IN AN UNUSUALLY FAVORABLE LIGHT. IT CONTENDS THAT THE FRG, ALONG WITH CERTAIN OTHER CAPITALISTS COUNTRIES (WHICH REMAIN UNNAMED), IS "MAKING A CERTAIN CONTRIBUTION TO..PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE." THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THE FRG'S EASTERN TREATIES CREATED THE "BASIS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW" FOR THE RESOLUTION OF MANY POST-WAR EUROPEAN PROBLEMS -- "A BASIS WHICH DOUBTLESS WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND BROADENED" AFTER THE CSCE. "ONE CANNOT FAIL TO SEE THE CONTRIBUTION MADE TO THIS BY REALISTICALLY THINKING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES IN THE FRG, INCLUDING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS."

5. YEZHOV DOES TAKE A SWIPE AT THE CDU/CSU FOR "THINKING IN CATEGORIES OF THE PAST" BUT HE ALSO CONTENDS THAT THE SPD CONFERENCE CONCLUDED, STRAUSS NOTWITHSTANDING, THAT THE FRG CANNOT CONDUCT A REALISTIC FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON "MAOIST ANTISOVIETISM" THE GENERAL TONE OF THE ARTICLE IS A RATHER ABRUPT CHANGE FROM THAT OF THE PRESS COVERAGE OF THE FRG IN RECENT WEEKS. IT MAKES NO MENTION OF THE TOUCH BERLIN ISSUE. IT SEEMS TO US TO BE QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED (A MONTH AND A HALF AFTER THE SPD CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE) SIMPLY TO BALANCE OUT THE DURBB NG THE FRG HAS BEEN TAKING LATELY IN THE SOVIET PRESS. IT COULD ALSO BE A SIGNAL TO BONN THAT THE FANFARE SURROUNDING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR
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DOES NOT CHANGE CONTINUING SOVIET INTEREST IN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE FRG. YEZHOV STATES THAT THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS OF THE TWO NATIONS HAVE COME A LONG WAY IN RECENT YEARS, BUT THAT THE POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT "IS REALLY ENORMOUS."

6. THE FRG EMBASSY HERE NEVERTHELESS REMAINS NERVOUS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS. FRG AMBASSADOR SAHM TOLD US ON FEBRUARY 27 (BEFORE PUBLICATION

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OF THE YEZHOV ARTICLE) THAT HE HAS RECEIVED A REPORT THAT AN FRG DESIGN EXHIBIT WHICH WAS TO COME TO MOSCOW AND THEN TOUR SOME OF THE SOVIET UNION'S LESSER CITIES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE MOSCOW. THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION WILL BE THAT "PUBLIC MEMORIES OF THE WAR" MAKES IT INADISABLE TO TAKE THE EXHIBIT OUTSIDE OF (PUTATIVELY MORE COSMOPOLITAN) MOSCOW.

7. AMBASSADOR SAHM SPECULATED THAT PERHAPS THE STRESS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENDING OF THE WAR IS RECEIVING IS ITSELF SOMEHOW CONNECTED WITH A SOVIET EFFORT TO BALANCE OFF THE RELATIVELY FAVORABLE IMAGE GIVEN THE FRG MOST OF THE TIME THESE PAST FEW YEARS. WE DOUBT THAT THIS IS THE CASE. PUBLICATION OF THE YEZHOV ARTICLE MAY IN FACT BE AN INDICATION OF SOVIET RECOGNITION THAT IT IS GOING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN, UNDER THE IMPOSING WEIGHT OF THE MEMORY OF WORLD WAR II, THE IMAGE OF MINIMUM ACCEPTABILITY THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKE TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE FRG AT THIS STAGE OF THE DETENTE RELATIONSHIP.
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